

# What to do... Flooding

## Flooding can take many forms in Caddo and Bossier Parishes

**River flooding** occurs seasonally when winter or spring rains fill the river's basin with too much water, too quickly. For the Red River this is a natural and inevitable part of life. Torrential rains from decaying hurricanes or tropical storms may also produce major river floods. It is important to note that river flooding can occur in just a few hours and last a day, a week, or longer.

**Urban / Area floods** are due to the conversion of fields or woodlands to roads and parking lots. This urbanization increases runoff 2 to 6 times over what would occur on natural terrain. Subsequently, in the growing Shreveport-Bossier Metropolitan area, streets can become swift-moving rivers and low-lying areas can flood within hours.

**Backwater flooding** occurs as rivers, bayous, and lakes become full and back up. In the Caddo-Bossier area backwater flooding can be found adjacent to area lakes and low-area flood plains as rainfall and resulting runoff cannot drain.

**Flash flooding** occurs within a few minutes or hours of excessive rainfall. The rapidly rising water can reach heights of 30 feet or more and can roll boulders, rip trees from the ground, and destroy buildings and bridges.

## What to do before any flooding occurs...

- Know the flood risk and the elevations above flood stages for your area. If local rivers or bayous flood easily be prepared to move to a place of safety.
- Know the evacuation routes. Keep your automobile fueled. If electrical power is cut off, gas stations may not be able to operate.
- Assemble a disaster supplies kit (see "Disaster Supplies Kit Brochure, CBOHSEP)
- Keep a NOAA Weather Radio, a battery powered radio, and flashlight in working order.
- Contact Caddo-Bossier OHSEP for additional information and helpful brochures regarding emergency preparedness.

## Did you know?

1. *Nine out of ten "Presidential Disaster Declarations" result from natural phenomena in which flooding is involved.*
2. *Eighty percent of flood deaths occur when people drive into water or simply walk into moving water.*
3. *It only takes two feet of water to make a large vehicle buoyant enough to lose traction and float away.*



## Stay informed about the storms

The Caddo-Bossier OHSEP will coordinate emergency services, communication, and resources to assist the community in the event of a flood. Public information advisories will be given to local news media for broadcast. Citizens in the Caddo-Bossier area should...

- Listen to NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radio, and television stations for the latest flooding information.
- Be aware that the NOAA Weather Radio is the best means to receive warnings, of impending natural disasters, from the National Weather Service (NWS). The NWS continuously broadcasts updated weather and forecasts, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, that can be received on a NOAA Weather Radio.
- Contact Caddo-Bossier OHSEP for further information on the weather alert features currently available in your community.

## What to listen for...

### **FLASH FLOOD or FLOOD WATCH**

Means: Flash flooding or flooding is possible within the designated watch area. Citizens should be alert for further developments.

### **FLASH FLOOD or FLOOD WARNING**

Means: Flash flooding or flooding has been reported or is imminent. Citizens should take necessary precautions at once.

### **URBAN and SMALL STREAM ADVISORY**

Means: Flooding of small streams, bayous, streets, and low-lying areas (i.e. railroad underpasses, urban storm drains) is occurring.

### **FLASH FLOOD or FLOOD STATEMENT**

Means: Follow-up information regarding flash flood or flooding event.

## Taking action

The action to take in a flooding situation is simple:

**Head for higher ground and stay away from flood waters.**

- Get out of areas subject to flooding; including dips, low spots, and flood prone areas.
- If driving, be aware that under any floodwaters the roadbed may not be intact. Turn around and find another route. **Never drive through flooded roadways.** If your vehicle stalls, leave it immediately and seek higher ground. Rising water may engulf the vehicle and its occupants sweeping them away.
- Be especially cautious at night when it is harder to recognize flood dangers.



# "don't be afraid...be prepared"

Caddo-Bossier Office of  
Homeland Security  
& Emergency Preparedness

## Simple steps to protect life and property

**Protect your past** by placing valuables in plastic storage containers and move them to the attic or other elevated location.

**Protect your present** by purchasing insurance through the National Flood Insurance Program. It will help you recover from a loss financially due to flooding.

**Protect your future** by elevating expensive items such as outside air conditioning units. Seal vents to basements to prevent flooding. During a flood, immediately shut off your electricity at the circuit breakers.

**Protect your peace of mind** by learning your evacuation routes. Remember you may need to know more than one way to escape rising water. Monitor NOAA Weather Radio to ensure you know the latest weather developments, and avoid driving on flooded roads.

## During the flood...

- When advised to evacuate; do so immediately.
- Move to a safe area before access is cut off by the flood.
- Avoid areas subject to sudden flooding.
- Avoid flowing streams with water above you ankles.
- Avoid flooded roads. The dangers are greater than the inconvenience of finding an alternate route.
- Children should *never* play around high water or storm drains.

## Staying healthy

A flood can cause emotional and physical stress. You need to look after yourself and your family before focusing on the cleanup and / or repair to your property.

- Rest often and eat well.
- Keep a manageable schedule; make a list and do jobs one at a time.
- Discuss your concerns with others and seek help. Contact the Caddo-Bossier OHSEP or American Red Cross for information on emotional support available in your area.

## Getting help

Listen to local television or radio stations to find out where to go for assistance, or call the Northwest Louisiana Chapter of the American Red Cross at (318) 869-9545.

- The American Red Cross can help you by providing vouchers to purchase new clothing, groceries, essential medications, bedding, essential furnishings, and other items to meet emergency needs.
- The American Red Cross can provide you with a cleanup kit, mop, broom, bucket, and cleaning supplies.
- The American Red Cross and Caddo-Bossier OHSEP can provide you with information on other disaster assistance groups to assist following a flood.
- Contact your insurance agent as soon as possible to discuss any claims.
- Listen to your radio or read the newspaper for information on additional help from the state or federal government or other agencies.
- If you hire cleanup or repair contractors, be sure they are qualified. Be wary of people driving through the neighborhood offering help in cleaning up or repairing your home. Check references and ask to see business licenses.

*What to do...*

*Flooding*



For more information on any natural or technological disaster contact:

Caddo-Bossier Office of Homeland Security  
& Emergency Preparedness  
P.O. Box 192, Shreveport, LA 71161  
(318) 425-5351  
[www.caddobossierohsep.org](http://www.caddobossierohsep.org)

*"Moving water is a powerful force of nature."*